BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

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tel (250) 387-0327
fax (250) 387-0329

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Prices

- **British Columbia's consumer price index (CPI) increased to 0.5% above the February 1998 level last month.** Inflation rates in Victoria (+0.3%) and Vancouver (+0.3%) were even lower. BC's inflation rate has remained below one percent in all but one month since June of 1996, and has stayed below the national average since late 1995.

  Canada's inflation rate was 0.7%. Quebec (+0.4%) and Ontario (+0.6%) recorded modest increases in the CPI, but inflation rates were significantly higher in the Prairie provinces (ranging from 1.6% in Saskatchewan to 2.2% in Alberta). Every Atlantic province except Nova Scotia (where the CPI was 0.2% higher than in February 1998) experienced deflation last month. This trend is relatively recent in New Brunswick and Newfoundland, but prices in Prince Edward Island have been falling since early last year.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **Declining shelter (-1.0%) and transportation (-0.3%) costs continued to be the primary reason for BC's low inflation rate.** Prices for most other commodities increased at or above the national average. British Columbians faced higher-than-average price increases for household operations (+1.9%), clothing and footwear (+2.7%), and health and personal care (+2.9%) items. The cost of alcohol and tobacco (+1.0%) and recreation, education and reading materials (+0.0%) increased less than in all of Canada. Food prices rose 1.5%. *Source: Statistics Canada*

The Economy

- **Exports of BC products were 11.9% higher in January than a year earlier, increasing for the sixth time in as many months.** The rebound in the value of BC's exports since last summer has been partly due to exchange rate effects. Many commodities exported from BC are sold at prices set in international markets, which are often denominated in US funds. A rough adjustment for changes in the exchange rate (by converting the value of exports to US dollar terms) indicates that, without the decline in the value of the loonie, BC's exports would have risen 6.2% in January. This was the first time since mid-1997 that exchange rate effects have not accounted for most of the improvement in the value of BC's exports. *Source: Statistics Canada & BC STATS*

- **BC's forest product exports were sharply higher in January, increasing to 14.9% above the January 1998 level.** International sales of automotive products (+65.6%), consumer goods (+27.7%) and machinery and equipment (+18.8%) advanced significantly, with more moderate growth in the value of agriculture and fish (+9.5%) and energy product (+4.0%) exports. However, exports of industrial goods were down 14.6%. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Canadian exports rose 8.1%, led by a 23.3% increase in the value of exports from Quebec.** The increase was partly due to continued strength in Quebec's export markets, and partly due to low exports in January 1998 after the ice storm shut down many manufacturing plants in the province. Exports from Ontario (+10.4%) were also well above last year's level. PEI (+23.2%), BC (+11.9%) and Nova Scotia (+7.3%) were the only other provinces where exports increased. Exports fell in all three Prairie provinces. Saskatchewan (-14.9%) was the hardest hit. Newfoundland's exports were down 35.1%, largely fuelled by a 37.3% downturn in the value of energy exports. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Report **Researching your business...a guide to business planning**

Did you know...
According to a recently published book, statisticians have the best working environment among 250 different occupations. Who has the worst job? The President of the United States!!

- **Shipments of goods produced by British Columbia manufacturers fell 1.5% (seasonally adjusted) in January.** The downturn was largely due to weakness in the non-durables (-4.6%) sector, where shipments fell in nine of the thirteen industries. The value of paper and allied products–BC's second most important manufactured product–dropped 5.3%, and food shipments were down 1.5%. In the durables sector, the value of shipments rose to 0.9% above December levels. Wood manufacturers staged a comeback, with shipments increasing for the second straight month (+3.0%). However, producers of electrical and electronic equipment did not fare as well. The value of goods shipped by this industry declined 4.4%, the fifth time in seven months that its shipments have fallen.

  January marked the end of a five-month long upturn in Canada's manufacturing sector, which had been bolstered by increased activity as motor vehicle manufacturers scrambled to rebuild inventories drawn down by strong consumer demand and supply constraints resulting from the GM strike last summer. Shipments fell 0.7% at the national level, and were down in seven provinces. Alberta (-5.4%) and Newfoundland (-4.5%) posted the largest declines. Quebec manufacturers (+3.3%) were the only ones to increase their shipments significantly in January.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **The number of cars, trucks and vans sold in the province fell 2.5% in January (relative to the same month last year), to a total of 10,152.** Vehicle sales also remained weak in Alberta (-6.6%) and Saskatchewan (-7.1%), but increased in the rest of the country, rising 12.1% nationally. Quebec (+42.3%) led the way. Vehicle sales in Quebec were abnormally low in January 1998, as the effects of last year's ice storm kept many consumers away from car lots in the province. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Department store sales in BC and the territories were unchanged in January, compared to the same month of 1998.** BC (including the north) was the only region where sales did not increase. Nationally, sales were up 7.4%. Quebec (+12.2%) and Newfoundland/PEI (+10.0%) led the regions. Increases in other parts of the country ranged from 2.6% in Manitoba to 8.9% in Ontario. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Wholesale sales in the province fell 2.8% (seasonally adjusted) between December and January.** Canadian sales were up 0.4%, led by a 6.8% increase in Saskatchewan. Sales decreased in five regions, with BC (-2.8%), Nova Scotia (-2.8%) and NWT (-10.3%) posting the largest declines. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Tourism

- **Passengers continued to travel through Victoria's airport in record numbers during the first two months of this year.** Last month, traffic through the airport was up 13.6% from February 1998, and January's figures were 10.7% higher than a year earlier. Almost 20,000 more people used the airport in the first two months of 1999 than a year earlier.

  Source: Victoria Airport Authority

- **Direct entries by non-residents to Canada via British Columbia increased 18.3% in January, compared to the same month last year.** Americans continued to flock to the province, with entries rising to 21.5% above last year's level. Entries from other parts of the world increased only 1.5%. European entries rose 21.0%, but Asian entries continued to fall (-14.9%). Asians account for half of all entries to the province from countries other than the US.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Skier Visits

- **Ski hills in British Columbia attracted an estimated 4,397,000 downhill skiers during the 1997/98 season.** This figure was slightly less (-2.8%) than in the previous winter, when there were 4,522,000 skier visits. Despite the modest downturn, ski resorts in BC did better than those in most neighbouring regions. Washington
  (-1.9%) was the only exception. Overall, visits to ski hills in BC, Alberta and the Pacific Northwest states were down 4.2%. Visits dropped off the most in Alberta (-8.2%) and Montana (-6.5%) and fell more moderately in Oregon (-3.7%). BC attracted 42.2% of the 10,426,000 skier visits in the regional market during 1997/98.

  Source: Ministry of Employment and Investment data

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS
Ministry of Finance
and Corporate Relations

Contact: Data Services (250) 387-0327
Released: October 1998

British Columbia

Researching your business

A guide to business planning information resources for entrepreneurs

Notes:

BC STATS is the statistical agency for the Province of British Columbia. Our business is to provide data to the government of BC, businesses, and the general public. While we are not in the business of preparing or instructing people on how to create a business plan, our data services staff are available to assist people in their search for data sources. This handout is intended as a tool to help guide you to the relevant sources and kinds of data that are available through BC STATS and other agencies that you will need as you research and prepare for your new business venture.

The information presented herein is intended only as a guide for persons who are undertaking research for business planning purposes. This guide does not purport to describe all available information sources, either current or future. This document does not describe how to write a business plan or how to operate a business.

Why a business plan?

Success in today's complex economy requires a solid foundation of knowledge from which sound business decisions can be made. For most people considering or involved in creating a new business venture, this foundation is built from a formal business plan. Even if you believe your business does not require a formal plan, most business experts highly recommend that you conduct at least some preliminary research prior to committing yourself legally or financially to your business enterprise.

The strategic value of a business plan is derived from the information you collect and the knowledge you acquire during this process. That is, the exercise of preparing a business plan is critical in helping you gain an understanding of how your business venture will operate in the marketplace. Financial lenders and other potential investors & advisors will use your business plan as a tool to assess their level of support for your enterprise. As such, it is important to ensure your plan is as complete, reliable and timely as possible.

Although it may seem an intimidating or even an impossible task at first, a plan that does not capture the most relevant and appropriate data for your venture will only serve to undermine your efforts. This is not to say, however, that there will always be the kind or form of information available that your business plan requires, just that an effective business plan will make the best use of what is available at the time of research & preparation. At present, there are a number of organizations, both government sponsored and private, operating in BC, who are prepared to assist you in the creation of your business.

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What kind of information to look for

Your business plan is designed for two purposes: first, to demonstrate the feasibility of your business venture, and second, to serve as a strategic planning tool for your current and future business development. It ultimately must answer the following question: is there or will there be sufficient demand for the product or service you will supply? Your research must demonstrate support for your belief there is a share for you in the marketplace.

It is important for you to gain an understanding of the general economic conditions that will affect your chosen business. This will require an examination of the **INDUSTRY** your product or service falls into, and the **MARKET** you will access.

All business within the general economy is described within at least one **INDUSTRY** classification, and is called an industry sector. Once you have determined your sector you can undertake **SECTOR ANALYSIS**. This will provide information ranging from the **Performance** of this sector within the overall economy, as well as information on the kinds of **Products/Services** that are **extracted**, **manufactured**, **imported/exported**, **etc.** You can also research current industry **CONDITIONS**, including overall **Market analysis**, **Forecasts** and **Growth trends**. This kind of information will give you a broad understanding of how your business may fit into the economy in general over time. It can also give you a sense of how developed or populated the business market might be that you are preparing to enter.

Once you have gained a general understanding it is time to focus more specifically on your **MARKET**. This will include both **BUSINESS** and **CLIENTS**. The **BUSINESS** market you need to research includes business **Competitors** and **Suppliers**. You will need to know who your **Competitors** are, their location, and their current **market share**. This will require information on their customer size, number of employees, the products they produce, their profitability, etc. You will need to know who your **Suppliers** are, their location, how long they have been established, their distribution and other operating methods. An understanding of the business market will allow you to gain some perspective on how your business may or should develop, and how to manipulate the existing market to your best advantage.

The most critical information you will require concerns the potential **CLIENTS** of your business. You will need to know **Who** they are, **Where** they are located, **What** they buy, and **Why** they might utilize your products/services. To find who they are requires **demographic** (population counts, age/sex breakdown, languages, etc.) and **socio-economic** information (employment levels, income, occupation, education). You will want to know where these prospective clients live, work, and play, and **What** they buy now or have bought in the past. Finally, you need to research **consumer characteristics** such as spending habits, and other consumer profile data to help you understand **Why** they might want your product. With this information you will be able to develop a more precise picture of the target market you need to attract to support your business.

Where to find information

There are many federal and provincial programs available to help you establish commercial ventures at home or abroad. Some agencies, such as Business Development Canada, and the Canada-BC Business Service Centre, will offer active help in researching and preparing your business plan. Many agencies offer extensive information through their internet web sites (Industry Canada, HRDC) or by producing publications and maintaining libraries of information that can be accessed through inter-library loans (Canadian Tourism Commission, etc.). BC STATS and Statistics Canada both maintain extensive reference libraries and will provide limited data through telephone and e-mail service. BC STATS provides web page access to a significant amount of data. The following lists some of the agencies and organizations that may contain the information you require to research your business.

Organization	Location	Contact	Internet
BC STATS	Victoria	250-387-0327	www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca
Statistics Canada	Vancouver	604-666-3691/1-800-263-1136	www.statcan.ca
Canada-BC Business Service Centre	Vancouver	604-775-5525/1-800-667-2272	www.sb.gov.bc.ca
Industry Canada	Vancouver	Blue pages	www.ic.gc.ca
Human Resource Development Canada	Local/EI offices	Blue Pages	www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca
Business Development Canada	Local	Blue pages	www.bdc.ca
Canadian Mortgage & Housing Canada	Vancouver	Blue pages	www.cmhc.ca
Revenue Canada	Vancouver	Blue pages	www.rc.gc.ca
Canadian Tourism Commission	Ottawa	613-954-3943	www.canadatourism.com
Government Agents Offices	Local	Blue pages	n/a
Regional & Local libraries	Local	Blue pages	n/a
University & College libraries	Local	White pages	n/a
Chambers of Commerce	Local	White pages	n/a
Regional Economic Development offices	Local	Blue pages	n/a
Regional District & Municipal Offices	Local	Blue pages	n/a
Trade & Industry magazines & newspapers	Library	Business/reference	n/a
Industry & Trade Associations		Yellow pages/Canadian Almanac	n/a

You might want to look here

INDUSTRY

SECTOR ANALYSIS

- Standard Industrial Classification (SIC)
- Standard Classification of Goods (SCG) (Based on HS)

Performance

- National Financial Accounts/ Provincial Economic Accounts
- GDP at Factor Cost/ Provincial GDP by Industry

Products

extracted

- Forestry Statistics
- Mineral Production
- Oil & Gas production

manufactured

- Survey of Manufacturers

import/export

- Imports/Exports by Commodity
- Imports/Exports by Country
- BC Origin Exports

etc.

- Leisure & personal services
- Software Development & computer service industry
- Business services

CONDITIONS

- Economic Observer
- Small Business Quarterly
- Business Indicators
- Quarterly Regional Statistics
- BC Credit Union Economic Analysis
- BC Economic Update

Market Analysis

- Building Permits
- Housing Starts
- Tourism Market Reports
- Major Projects Inventory
- Homeowner Repair & Renovation Expenditure
- Retail Sales

Forecasts

- Charter Banks/Credit Unions
- BC Economic Review & Outlook
- Canadian Economic Outlook (WEFA)
- Conference Board of Canada
- Current Statistics

Growth Trends

- Labour Force Survey/Labour Force Statistics
- Quarterly Regional Statistics

MARKET

BUSINESS

- Small Business Profiles

Competitors & Suppliers

- Yellow pages/Directories
- Trade magazines/Newspapers
- Annual Reports
- BC Tourism Product Guide
- BC Manufacturers' Directory
- Canadian Almanac

CLIENTS

- Census of Population
- Socio-economic Statistical Profiles
- Community Fact Sheets
- Community Profiles
- Pcensus

Who

demographic

- Census
- Population Projections
- Population Estimates
- Migration/Immigration
- Income Distribution of Families

socio-economic

- Census
- Taxation Statistics
- Labour Force Survey
- Employment, Earnings & Hours Survey
- Neighbourhood Income & Demographics
- Economic Dependency Profiles
- EI & IA Stats

Where

- GEOREF
- Standard Geographic Classification
- PCensus

What

- Family Expenditure Survey
- Family Food Expenditure Survey
- Household Facilities & Equipment

Why

- Personal Survey
- Trade Publications
- Market Research Organizations

Some sources described

Standard Industrial Classification (Statistics Canada): A system of classifying companies and enterprises according to the activity in which they are engaged. Most recent is 1980. Encompasses all business activity in Canada. This classification structure provides the basis for most Statistics Canada industry data tabulations.

Standard Classification of Goods (Statistics Canada) A system that classifies commodities based on an eight digit harmonized commodity description & coding system. This classification identifies commodity classes for imports, exports, and manufactured goods. Critical for most product analysis.

Standard Geographic Classification (Statistics Canada) A system of names and codes representing areas in Canada. Identifies all Provinces, Regional Districts (Census Divisions), and municipalities (Census Subdivisions) in Canada. Knowing how geographic areas are structured will help you determine which area to select for your target market.

Economic Observer (Statistics Canada) A compendium of economic and financial statistics for Canada. Some data on the provinces. Represented mostly as time series. Some analysis and feature articles provided.

Small Business Quarterly (BC STATS) A variety of data series on small business in BC. Provides information on business counts, incorporations and bankruptcies, number of businesses by employee size, manufacturers outlook for business conditions. Includes some analysis.

Business Indicators (BC STATS) A range of up-to-date economic and financial data, including production and shipments for British Columbia's major industries. Some time series and analysis.

Quarterly Regional Statistics (BC STATS) Organized by region, and features current monthly and quarterly economic data. Includes charts and tables. Areas covered include British Columbia, Development Regions and Regional Districts.

Small Business Profiles (Statistics Canada) Profiles of businesses reporting between $25,000 & $5,000,000 in revenue. Provides data from financial ratios to employment size. Sample data only, subject to high level of suppression. Available for most SIC at the 4 digit level. Last SBP available for 1993, BC & Canada.

Census of Population & Housing (Statistics Canada) Conducted every 10 years from 1851, and every 5 years from 1956, the Census is most comprehensive coverage of demographic & socio-economic information on Canadians. Published information is available down to the neighbourhood (Census Tract) level. For additional cost, special areas and Postal Code (3 digit) level detail available. Some non-standard provincial areas (i.e. Local Health Area, School Districts, Forest Regions, etc.) available at cost from BC STATS.

Socio-economic Statistical Profiles (BC STATS): Individual profiles for 8 Development Regions and 30 Regional Districts. Includes tables and charts covering population growth, ethnic origin, migration, family structure, labour market, income, unemployment, social assistance, crime, child care, education and health. Produced once a year.

Community Profiles (BC STATS) Contains a variety of statistical information for each Regional District & corresponding municipal areas.

PCensus (Tetrad Computer Applications Inc.) Utilizing Census data, PCensus is a program that allows area profile data to be developed for non-standard geographic areas, such as polygons and radii. Available at cost through BC STATS or through Tetrad Computer Applications in Vancouver. Useful for determining immediate market size based on a specified location.

Business Register (Statistics Canada) Records the number and distribution of business establishments based on the SIC in Canada & BC. Data at a sub-provincial level of detail is only available through Statistics Canada. Useful to gain an understanding of the number of competitors or suppliers within your selected area.

Manufacturers' Directory (BC STATS) Details almost 6,000 manufacturers in BC, including employment size, commodities produced, export status, and contact names & addresses. Selected data runs available at cost through BC STATS. In electronic or paper format.

Population Projections (BC STATS) Detailed statistical tables providing historical and forecast populations by age & sex for Regional Districts, Local Health Areas, & other non-standard geography. Critical for determining present and potential future market size for years not covered by Census data.

Major Projects Inventory (BC STATS) Information on major capital projects, listed by development region and status (proposed, under construction, on hold, or completed) for projects costing 15 million or more.

Survey of Manufacturers (Statistics Canada) A sample survey of manufacturing activities in Canada that results in a number of data publications and unpublished tables. Types of information include shipments, employment, number of establishments by SIC, value of production, salaries & wages, etc. Many SIC groups are cross tabulated by the SCG (commodities) they produce. Detailed information usually lags by 2 years. Available for Canada & BC. Unpublished data is also available by regional district.

Census Geography (GEOREF - Statistics Canada) Standard geographic areas can be either administrative or statistical.

Administrative		Statistical	
Name	**Otherwise known as**	**Name**	**Otherwise known as**
Province/Territory	Same	Census Agricultural Regions	Same
Federal Electoral District	Federal Ridings	Census Consolidated Subdivisions	Combined municipalities
Census Divisions	Regional Districts	Census Metropolitan Areas	Metro Area (City)
Census Subdivisions	Municipalities/Reserves	Census Tracts	Neighbourhoods
Designated places	Island Trust	Enumeration Areas	Same
Postal Codes	Same	Block Face	One side of a street

Non Standard Areas are aggregations of standard areas (i.e. Vancouver Island, Local Health Areas, School Districts, etc.). Data is available for some non-standard areas at cost.

Worth considering as you search

- When conducting research on any subject it is often useful to ask yourself the following question: how would the kind of information I need be collected? If you understand how something is done you will begin to understand where the information you need might be available. For instance, it is more likely a government agency will have income information than product sales since individuals and business must file income tax returns but do not need to file specific sales information other than total sales and taxes collected. Research for marketing purposes, consumer characteristics and preferences, and other more subjective personal data is for the most part not conducted by government ministries or agencies. The exceptions are Statistics Canada, Health Canada, and Tourism BC. Some ministries will sponsor research like this, but the information will be used for internal purposes only.

- Most statistics gathered by government agencies are done through survey and administrative files. These surveys are usually sample only, which means that not all individuals or businesses are polled. As a result, information at lower levels of geography will often be suppressed by law for respondent confidentiality requirements. Data from administrative records is usually related to financial transactions and/or other forms required of individuals and business operations by law for governments, agencies & crown corporations. Administrative data is often confidential. Names and information on individuals and/or companies will almost never be available from government data sources.

- Most libraries will keep business and market oriented data in their reference sections. Check with the Business or Reference Librarian. Local college and University libraries will carry most of Statistics Canada publications, particularly Census data.

- Back issues of newspapers like the Financial Post, and the Globe & Mail, are important sources for data on businesses and industry sectors. They may also contain references to market research or other documents that may be available on the subject. Industry and trade magazines are often important sources for 'insider' information.

- Sometimes the most effective and relevant market research data is done by personal survey. This means either direct or indirect contact with other businesses in the sector you are researching. Do not hesitate to visit their stores, call up business owners, talk to the wholesalers and distributors, or talk to your friends about the products or services you are thinking of offering. The kind of information gathered this way is often as indicative of the market as any other statistic.

- Data dissemination activities and personnel are often the first cuts to be made by organizations faced with pressure to decrease costs. Be prepared to spend time researching for yourself at the reference centres and libraries in your area. More and more information is made available through government web sites, either federal, provincial and/or local. Many libraries will provide limited internet access to their patrons.

- Many of the statistics available may seem too dated to be of use. Time lags between data collection and dissemination are an inherent product of the high level of data quality demanded by most federal and provincial agencies. Canadian statistics organizations are highly regarded throughout the world. Data that seems out of date is still the best available, and recognized as such by most people.

Some people who can help

There are many people who are more than willing to help you develop a business plan. The bottom line is, however, that the true value of a business plan is what you put into it. Use your research skills to locate information on how to write a business plan. Following are a few of the places you might get some help.

- Chartered Banks/Credit Unions
- Accountants
- Lawyers
- Business Development Canada
- Canada-British Columbia Business Service Centre
- Chambers of Commerce/Boards of Trade
- Community Colleges/Night school courses
- Business Consultants
- Internet

An example

Ralph is considering starting an antique wood furniture business. He has some personal knowledge of the industry and is familiar with the typical operation of a retail establishment. He knows the majority of his business will be with the public although he does anticipate acting as a distributor (agent) for other antique dealers.

Ralph begins researching his business plan by determining the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) of the antique furniture industry, and the Standard Classification of Goods (SCG) of each of his prospective product lines. As the majority of his sales will be to the public, the kind of business establishment he operates will be classified as a Secondhand Merchandise Store (SIC 6591). His product lines will range from Furniture Exceeding 100 years (SCG 9706.00.10) to simple Other Wood Furniture (SCG 9403.60).

After researching general statistics on the state of the Canadian economy and its relation to Retail Trade (household furniture sales) over time, Ralph uses the appropriate SCG codes for the amount and value of Commodity Imports and Exports to get an idea of potential antique supply and market size. He also looks up the SIC code to determine the number of current manufacturers of wood furniture products in Canada. From this research Ralph calculates that the antique furniture business is relatively unaffected by the ups and downs of the business cycle and has been relatively stable over the last 10 years.

Ralph's next task is to determine where his business might fit into the marketplace. He obtains a Small Business Profile for SIC 6591, and scours various directories, newspapers, magazines at his local library to get an understanding of current trends and supply sources in the industry. He also checks out the BC Manufacturers' Directory to locate potential suppliers. Ralph determines from FAMEX data the average expenditure by households on wood secondhand furniture. An examination of the demographic and socio-economic data from the Census, population estimates by age for regional districts, and income statistics from taxation data helps him determine where the greatest concentration of potential buyers might live. With this information in hand, Ralph locates the neighbourhood where he wants to open his store and begins a personal survey of local businesses and the general public. Although he now has enough information to undertake his business plan, Ralph knows to be successful he must find the time to continue his research of the industry to keep his business operation competitive.

Infoline

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fax transmission information service from **BC STATS**

also on the Internet at http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Oct 1/98	% change on one year ago
BC	4,016.9	0.9
Canada	30,381.1	0.9
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	1997	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	109,347	3.3
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	98,201	2.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	24,775	0.1
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	16,340	-2.3
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Jan	2,912	7.0
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jan	2,098	11.9
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Dec	2,752	-5.0
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		
(all items - 1992=100)	Feb '99	% change on one year ago
BC	110.1	0.5
Canada	109.1	0.7
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		
(seasonally adjusted)	Feb '99	% change on one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,104	3.8
Employed - BC	1,934	5.7
Unemployed - BC	170	-14.2
		Feb '98
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.1	9.8
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	7.8	8.6
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Mar 17/99	Mar 18/98
Prime Business Rate	6.75	6.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.60	6.40
- 5 year	7.15	6.85
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Mar 17/99	Mar 18/98
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.5217	1.4186
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6573	0.7047
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Dec '98	% change on one year ago
BC	619.63	1.1
Canada	606.59	1.1

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm

New on our site . . .

With each Census since 1986 we have created a statistical profile for Provincial Electoral Districts [PEDs]. As part of a forthcoming edition based on the 1996 Census we've created a set of single-page profiles for each PED in BC. Go to:

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/DATA/ ...[cont]
CEN96/ped96/ped96.htm

Also new . . .

Our Internet subscription service provides access to the electronic version of eleven statistical periodicals over the course of a year. To enhance this service **we are now providing access to an archive of covers and articles** from recently released issues. This service is only available to subscribers.

If you are undecided about the benefits of subscription, it may help to preview an older issue of the various items to be found in our subscribers only directory. Some of the items include only the cover or a sample section of the actual report. We will try to complete this work as time permits. For now, we hope it's enough to get you motivated to subscribe today!

Released this week by BC STATS

- Labour Force Statistics, February 1999
- Consumer Price Index, February 1999

Next week

- Business Indicators, March 1999
- Current Statistics, March 1999
- Earnings & Employment Trends, December '99
- Tourism Room Revenue, December 1999

BC STATS, Min. of Finance & Corporate Relations, Box 9410 Stn Prov Govt. Victoria, B.C. V8W 9V1
Tel: (250) 387-0327 Fax: (250) 387-0329 Web: http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca E-mail: BC.Stats@gems8.gov.bc.ca